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Adhika Irlang Suwiryono & Ellis R. Artyana	<i>Sign Language interpreting in English Language Teaching for a Deaf student: A case study</i>	1 – 16
Clara Herlina Karjo	<i>Comparing the effect of ICT and longhand note-taking instructions towards learners’ comprehension test results</i>	17 – 30
Fuad Abdullah & Lulita	<i>Social actors in an intercultural communication classroom: A discursive lens of intercultural education</i>	31 – 51
Setyo Prasiyanto Cahyono	<i>Teaching L2 Writing through the use of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)</i>	53 – 72
Yuyus Saputra & Asri Siti Fatimah	<i>The use of TED and YOUTUBE in Extensive Listening Course: Exploring possibilities of autonomy learning</i>	73 – 84

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Sign Language interpreting in English Language Teaching for a Deaf student: A case study	1 – 16
<i>Adhika Irlang Suwiryo and Ellis R. Artyana</i>	
Comparing the effect of ICT and longhand note-taking instructions towards learners' comprehension test results	17 – 30
<i>Clara Herlina Karjo</i>	
Social actors in an intercultural communication classroom: A discursive lens of intercultural education	31 – 51
<i>Fuad Abdullah and Lulita</i>	
Teaching L2 Writing through the use of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)	53 – 72
<i>Setyo Prasiyanto Cahyono</i>	
The use of TED and YOUTUBE in Extensive Listening Course: Exploring possibilities of autonomy learning	73 – 84
<i>Yuyus Saputra and Asri Siti Fatimah</i>	

Sign Language Interpreting in English Language Teaching for a Deaf Student: A case study

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Abstract

This paper discusses the case of appropriating a teaching approach as a response to the needs of a Deaf student registering to an English Department of a State University in Depok. The study particularly looks at the sign language interpreting practice in the classroom. In the teaching and learning process, the sign language interpreter has a significant role in transferring the course materials from the lecturer. In other words, the interpreter becomes one important factor for the student's achievement in acquiring the target language. However, there are several challenges faced by the interpreter in delivering the teaching content, such as, speech tempo, the usage of determiners (*this*, *that*), the usage of media, classroom preparation, and language differences (English and BISINDO—the natural sign language used by the Deaf community in Indonesia). The aim of this paper is to provide a clear picture concerning 1) sign language interpreting process in English teaching classroom, 2) the coordination of interpreter and lecturer(s), both in classroom preparation as well as teaching process, and 3) challenges experienced by the interpreter. Questionnaire and in-depth interviews are used with the lecturers, the student, and the interpreter in order to elicit as well as acknowledge the data related to the classroom preparation and teaching process. Data were transcribed, coded, and analyzed following interpretive paradigm. The results of this research offer suggestions in sign language interpreting process in English teaching classroom.

Keywords: English Language Teaching, sign language interpreting, deaf student

Teaching Deaf student in a Foreign Language classroom

In this research, we present the sign language interpreting process in the English teaching class, particularly in Reading and Writing courses,

under the English Department Faculty of Humanities. The presence of sign language interpreter here is due to the enrollment of deaf student since 2016. Since then, both deaf student and hearing lecturers have sign language interpreters during the learning and teaching process.

Sign language interpreters are believed to have a crucial role in the English teaching classes where there is one deaf student in those classes. They interpret the utterances conveyed by both lecturers and the hearing peers. They also play important roles in uttering questions, answers, confirmation, even explanation signed by the deaf student to make a two-way communication possible in the classroom. It is clear that the role of sign language interpreters not merely passing the message back and forth, but they also have a contribution in manage the communication process of exchanging the messages (Roy, 2000, p. 101).

The interpreting process happens simultaneously with the utterances produced by both the teachers and the other hearing students. Every concept conveyed by the hearing teachers as well as hearing peers is transferred by the interpreter to deaf student in a specific sign language, that is *Bahasa Isyarat Indonesia* (BISINDO). BISINDO is the indigenous sign language in Indonesia that involves several dialects based on region (such as Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Banten, and others). Therefore, the student hopefully will not feel left behind with other students. As a mediator of different cultures—hearing and Deaf culture—sign language interpreters apply his or her competence in interpreting—which are seen from the complex structure of sign language (Reagan, 2010, p. 53). Sign language interpreters are people who understand this visual-gestural language as well as the culture of the Deaf. In other words, he or she is considered as a bilingual person in a certain situation (Roy, 2000, p. 103). Besides, they are also part of hearing community where spoken language(s) are used; and they do aware that spoken language has different linguistic frame from the Deaf. Therefore, there is a high expectation that he or she is able to understand each other's needs, interest, and current understanding (Wadensjö, 1998, p. 279) between the lecturers and deaf student; and between hearing students and deaf student. In other words, the interpreters are expected to be a mediator between the hearing and the deaf.

As aforementioned, sign language interpreters are considered to have an important role in English teaching classes. Since the teaching content is related to language, culture, and things related to humanities—and provided in English, it is necessary for faculty or university to provide suitable and qualified interpreters in order to support deaf student's comprehension. The sign language interpreters who voluntarily work with the deaf student are proficient users of Bahasa Indonesia, English, and sign languages. Though English is not their first language, they are familiar with this language in

their daily basis of work. Even though the qualification of the sign language interpreters is not similar, they perform as equal as they could.

Besides the sign language interpreter, the lecturers also have important roles in delivering the lecture content. In the teaching process, a lecturer is expected to find suitable teaching approaches for the students to benefit from the teaching and learning materials. In this way, the classroom activities will run effectively and its goals will be achieved (Brown, 2001). In accommodating deaf student in class, there are several considerations that need to be taken into account by the lecturers in providing teaching and learning materials (National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes, 2017). First, it is necessary to share course materials and teaching aids prior to class. If possible, lecturers meet the interpreters in order to give them an explanation or insight about the teaching course. Second, lecturers need to be mindful of their use of time while doing the presentation. By doing this, it will benefit both deaf and hearing students to absorb what is written on the slides before lecturers continue with his/her explanation. As for the interpreter, this will give him/her time to have a short break before continue interpreting. It is considered very important, especially when there is only one interpreter in class.

Another thing that needs to be taken into account is not to talk during written class work. In doing writing task, students—both hearing and deaf—tend to pay their attention and effort in writing. The deaf student cannot write task and see the interpreter at the same time. It will be better to give all the instruction in the beginning—before students start to write. If an additional and further explanation cannot be postponed, the interpreter needs to interrupt the deaf. If possible, he or she can make notes first, then sign it to the deaf. Regarding this, it depends on the deaf—whether he needs to be informed as quickly as possible or later after he finishes with his sentences or lines. Fourth, it is also important for lecturers to talk with the deaf as the first-person. That means lecturers should not talk to the interpreter when they would like to raise a question to the deaf student. It is advisable to use ‘I’ and ‘you’ with the deaf student rather than using ‘ask him’ or ‘tell him’ with the interpreter; and what important also is to look at the deaf student directly. This will strengthen the relationship between lecturers and the student as well. Most importantly, the deaf student will not feel being ignored by the lecturers.

In the second language teaching, a lecturer is not merely appearing to deliver the content. He or she is also a model for students in learning the second language. Through the teaching and learning process, students are able to gain the concept and the characteristic of the target language, such as English. Based on the theory of language acquisition, imitating vocabularies or simple sentences are natural in acquiring language. This is believed to be

appropriate methods also in learning the second language. Students also can learn the pronunciation by imitating how the lecturer pronounce the words and sentences. Therefore, it is obligatory that a teacher of language should be a person who has four competencies: a) grammatical competence, b) discourse competence, c) sociolinguistics competence, and d) strategic competence (Canale and Swain, 1980).

Based on those competencies, it is clearly inferred that a lecture should have the whole knowledge about lexical items, phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantic (grammatical competence). Furthermore, it is important for a lecture to acknowledge discourse competence where this could complement the grammatical competence. Since learning language is not merely about the structure, it is also important to understand the contact between language and social scheme (sociolinguistics competence). In addition, language teacher is expected to be able to break the silence in any situation in class (strategic competence). In other words, strategic in verbal communication, as well as nonverbal communication, should be acknowledged also.

BISINDO is a natural language that is mutually understood by the interpreter and the student. During the process of teaching, the teachers do what a teacher should do, such as explaining the teaching material, creating an atmosphere for discussion, and giving instruction and feedback. The student is able to absorb the lecture content by paying attention to the explanation interpreted by the sign language interpreter(s) and what is written on the board or the slide of PowerPoint. By using BISINDO as the media, the deaf student is mainly able to grasp the knowledge. Though, it is admitted that there are some challenges in the process of learning and interpreting, especially for terminologies, vocabularies, and idioms.

Research Methodology

This research is a qualitative as well as descriptive research. Qualitative research fits the purpose of describing the teaching and learning process for the Deaf student; and how the participants feel about the teaching practice. This research is conducted in an English Department of a State University in Depok. The study uses three research instruments to obtain data: Questionnaire, Interview Questions, and Classroom observation.

There are six participants involved in this study. These informants are classified into three different groups: a) lecturer, b) sign language interpreter, and c) student. In the first group, four English Department lecturers were asked to fill a questionnaire. These lectures are in charge of Reading and Writing courses. The questions are related to teaching process which is applied in class, teaching preparation before the D-day, and their

knowledge about sign language and deafness. The second group consists of one sign language interpreter. Our concern to only have one interpreter as our informant is because we would like to see how she deals with the four lecturers' teaching method. She is, more or less, able to maintain the classroom activities where the medium of instructions is in English. For all courses, she is in charge in transferring the information and questions conveyed by the lecturers (English to BISINDO) and in transferring questions, answers, and comments from the deaf student (BISINDO to English). This interpreter was also asked to fill a questionnaire which contains questions related to interpreting process, preparation, and sign language and deafness. The last group also only involves one student who is the only deaf student in English Department. He was also asked to fill a questionnaire where he is able to comment about teaching and interpreting services that have been served for him so far.

As aforementioned, the sign language interpreter here is able to transfer questions, comments, and answers delivered by all the participants in the classes. In her experiences in interpreting for the deaf Indonesian, she does interpret from spoken language (Bahasa Indonesia and/or English) to BISINDO and vice versa. Though she is not a certified interpreter yet, she could manage to voluntarily work as an interpreter in this Department. Due to her background in sign linguistics and her experiences in dealing with the language and the Deaf community, she is capable enough in doing interpreting for the deaf student in this English Department. Based on her experiences in doing study and research of sign language, she is familiar with three sign languages, such as BISINDO Jakarta, BISINDO Yogyakarta, and Hong Kong Sign Language (HKSL). Since the deaf student also has the ability in these languages, it is possible that certain communication barriers can be solved by using a combination of these languages. This situation could support the sign language interpreting in doing her interpreting work.

Our deaf informant is the only deaf person in his nuclear family, where there are hearing parents and hearing sibling. Based on the situation, it is clear that the members of the family are part of spoken language-community, e.g. Javanese and *Bahasa Indonesia*. Even though the rest of his family use spoken language as a mode of communication, based on the interview, he admitted that his first language is sign language. He acquired sign language during the period of school. By having sign language as his primary language to communicate with each other—his deaf peers, deaf seniors, and his junior—he manages to develop himself, in particular in learning subjects, e.g. second language (*Bahasa Indonesia* and/or English) and other things outside of school. In other words, having strong linguistic and cognitive skills is prominent in promoting the proficiency in the second language (Niederberger, 2008, p. 32). Having a strong foundation in the first

language is crucial, and it encourages him to be critical in thinking and able to criticize the information he gains.

As a student in the English Department, he is the only deaf student who gets enrolled in, even in the Faculty. As has been mentioned about his language preference, he relies on sign language in order to get informed and to get along with other peers. Based on that, it is assumed at first that he has a different method of studying subjects during his school study at the University. As a sign language user, he finds that using sign language in the learning process is more helpful than other media, such as reading lips or note-taking.

Just like the other students in the department he's enrolled to, he already has English background before he entered the University. He learned English during his period of study in Diploma and Higher Diploma Program at the Centre for Sign Linguistics and Deaf Studies, Chinese University of Hong Kong. During his study in Hong Kong, he learned English by using Hong Kong Sign Language (HKSL). The hearing teachers, who are proficient and fluent, both in English and HKSL teach English, starts from the basic until advanced level. The knowledge of English learned in Hong Kong become provisions for him in English reading and writing. Since this deaf informant has a strong foundation in his first language, that is sign language (*Bahasa Isyarat Indonesia*/BISINDO), learning English becomes more possible to be well-understood. Therefore, his competences in his first language support him in experiencing English reading and writing. Therefore, he basically could manage his study with English in the Department.

The informants, in particular, the lecturers and the sign language interpreter, are involved in the English teaching class for Reading for three semesters—Semester 1, Semester 2, and Semester 3 (mid of 2016—end of 2017). Based on that, we assume that they have enough experiences in teaching and interpreting English for the deaf in these courses. We make a comparison between the answers from the lecturers and the interpreter in order to see the compatibility. We also check on the answers by the deaf student in order to support the argument mentioned by other groups of informants.

Though the information is quite well-provided from the questionnaire, we conduct interviews, e.g. a face-to-face interview through electronic mail and personal chat. The interviews aim to confirm and gain information related to challenges in doing teaching, interpreting, and the learning process. After data are gathered, categorization of themes are generated. We also try to see the correlation between answers provided by the lectures and the sign language interpreter from three parts on the questionnaire.

Findings and discussion

In this research, the sample of our data is four classes of four different lecturers. There are two reading classes and two writing classes. Furthermore, there is one sign language interpreter who is assisted the four classes. The class arrangement could be seen as shown in table 1.

Table 1
Class Arrangement and participants' information

Course	Lecturer	Interpreter
Reading I	L1	Int
Writing II	L2	
Reading III	L3	
Writing III	L4	

These lecturers have no prior experience in meeting as well as teaching a deaf student. Having a deaf student in the English Department encourage the lecturers to provide a different system in terms of credit units. The Deaf student, for example, did not register to two competences classes, such as Speaking and Listening. Despite this adjustment, there are still some notes that should be delivered to the lecturers related to teaching method and teaching material.

Before we go into deep to the teaching method and teaching material, it is necessary to see their understanding of sign language and deafness. Basically, their perspective about deafness is positive. It can be seen from how they treat their deaf student in his or her class activity. However, when asked about what they understand by Sign Language and whether they had experienced teaching Deaf students, the answers they provide related to sign language varied as seen in excerpt 1.

As we can see from excerpt 1, L1 and L4 have knowledge about what sign language is. Unfortunately, L4 does not elaborate her answer. On the other hand, L1 mention that sign language is a system of communication where verbal communication is not the main mode, and it is culture-bounded. This basic understanding could cause an attitude which is deaf-friendly in the atmosphere of teaching. The other two participants wrote that they are not very familiar with sign language, but L2 is very well aware of making adjustment in his teaching in order to get the deaf student to be more involved in the course. Regarding the answer of L1 and L2, it can be seen that these lecturers pay much attention to what deaf student may need during the session (Brown, 2009). It is a crucial point to mention that lectures should have awareness about the Deaf student's needs. Regarding teaching a

deaf student, it is advisable to look for the best way to provide services for the student. The best service that the Department could have is by re-arrange the system and having sign language interpreter(s) in each class the deaf student attends. Hopefully, this way could encourage the deaf student to engage in classroom activities in a better way.

Excerpt 1

A system of communication which relies on the gesture, particularly hand movement, instead of verbal interaction. Just like verbal communication, it is also culture-bound, so different culture can have their own sign language system. (L1)

Not much. The Writing 1 class I taught in the even semester of 2016 was the first time for me to have a deaf student and an interpreter in my class. So, I had and have to make a lot of adjustments to make sure that the deaf student could and can get the most out of the class just like other non-disabled students that were/are taking the course. (L2)

Not much. (L3)

In general, yes. (L4)

Based on our observation during classroom activities, in teaching English, all the lectures tend to speak and write in English. In other words, the teaching method during those courses is a direct method. In the direct method, teachers or lecturers use the target language as the medium of instruction and explanation during the classroom activities. He or she spontaneously speaks and/or writes in the target language, e.g. English, starts from simple vocabularies to complex sentences. This is in line with the theory mentioned by Howatt (1984) below.

‘The vocabulary in the Direct Method is to be simple and familiar; the first few lessons of the Berlitz English course, for example, were based on objects in the classroom, clothing etc. followed by the verb ‘to be’ and common adjectives like big, small, thin, thick etc.’ (Howatt, 1984: 206)

A direct method has been considered to be the appropriate way of teaching the second language. There are several reasons that support the idea of direct method (Gupta, 2006). First, this method provides ample or wide opportunity for students’ fluency in speech and for good pronunciation. This

point is surely related to the capability owned by the teachers/lectures also—which encourage teachers of language to master competencies in target languages. Second, through a direct method, students or pupils are stimulated to think in the target language. In addition, this method develops their power of self-expression in the target language. Third, direct method—which is considered in applying modern principles of second language acquisition and teaching—concerns that concrete things followed by the abstract ones. In other words, it is necessary that teaching language, e.g. English, should concern about practice. As for the fourth reason, teaching language with a direct method is not merely teaching students to understand and know the language, but also giving students the opportunity to dig into what is inside the language. Therefore, students have more than just sensibility in using language but also being knowledgeable on the language.

In writing course, the use of model text was applied. Deaf student—as well as the hearing students—might be able to model the way a written text is produced (e.g. types of paragraph, journal, paper, or essay) or kinds of sentence structures. The deaf student is able to look at the examples or models and elaborate his own thoughts in his writing. Though deaf student cannot always imitate the sentences directly uttered by the lecturers, it is possible still for him to grasp it. For example, the interpreter could try to sign the English sentence word by word in BISINDO. However, it is knowledgeably known that this method will not be as effective as what is experienced by the hearing students—especially if the interpreter could not manage this well. This also will cost much time for the interpreter and the deaf student; and it might lead the deaf student into frustration. One solution that we could offer is to ask the lectures to write down the sentences, or the specific sentences that need to be learned by all students, on the board. This will help the deaf student to get the sentences visually—both in sign language (BISINDO) and in English structure. This also benefits the hearing students in which they can have time to write down or type the examples or the models in their notebook.

The direct method is applied in order to encourage the students to have the sense of target language. In Reading course, students learn how to read effectively and be critical on the reading they have on their hands. The deaf student in the same class experience the same, but not in learning how to pronounce the vocabulary or to make a pause in reading. However, he meets the objectives of learning and be able to improve his reading ability in English. By the support of interpreter, he understands the instruction to find the main topic and the details provided in readings. Furthermore, he also learned the reading strategies in reading different English texts.

In Writing course, this challenges deaf student more since this course urge all students to write well in English as what production classes aim for.

A support from lecturers is essential since a lot of terminologies, type of sentences, and kinds of paragraphs should be acquired and learned by all students, including the deaf student. As mentioned above, they could make use of the board or slides to show the examples of writing they intend to explain. Also, it is necessary for lecturers to make himself or herself clear enough in referring objects in their speech. For example, it is better to avoid using certain determiners, such as 'this' and 'that', while the interpreter does not look at the board or slide at the same time the lecturers speak.

In classroom activities, it is natural if students raise their hands and ask direct questions to the lecturers. The same technique is applied if the deaf student wants to ask questions or to clarify information. He will raise his hand to get a notice from his lecturer(s). He will ask or clarify straightway in BISINDO after he gets his turn. Then, the interpreter will interpret everything he asks or needs to clarify in English to lecturers and hearing students.

As what has been mentioned above, the adjustment has been made for the deaf, particularly in providing a different system of credit where the deaf does not have to enroll in Speaking and Listening courses. However, there are some points that actually need to be done in the teaching method and teaching material. From this questionnaire, we can see in general how the lecturers teach and prepare the teaching content before class. Lecturers provide the syllabi for all students, including the interpreter. Both deaf student and interpreter usually rely on the syllabi in order to know and be prepared with the teaching material for the next class.

Basically, the teaching material for Reading and Writing courses are available in a handbook—both for reading and writing respectively. In other words, it is not a must for lecturers to provide teaching material unless they have additional exercises for the students. However, this matter is a concern for the deaf and the interpreter, especially for the teaching content that involves a theory or a description related to the exercise on that day. It is so important, especially for the interpreter to understand the register of the specific theory being taught at that particular session, such as vocabularies, terminologies, and idioms. The language of the academic domain has its own specific technical language that may not be familiar for the interpreter. Therefore, it is important to discuss the material before the class so that she will be able to discuss the appropriate signs and the appropriate way to interpret those concepts with the deaf student. What usually happened during the class activities was that the interpreter had to stop signing and look to the board and/or slide to sign the intended vocabularies or idioms related to the English concept discussed at that meeting. Another similar concern related to the lecturer's delivering method is the use of determiner by the lecturers, such as 'this' and 'that'. Since the interpreter sits in front of

the class facing the student, she cannot see the board and/or slide directly, relying on the lecturer’s spoken explanation. Missing out the ability to signify the incidental use of ‘this’ and ‘that’ in the lecturer’s speech may cause a “pause” or “intrusion” to the flow of signing. This pause will cause a lag for the interpreting work and also a delay for the deaf to receive the information. To minimize or overcome this concern, it would be better if the deaf student gets the teaching material beforehand. This will surely give him ample time to learn and understand the vocabularies, terminologies, idioms, or other English concepts since English is his second language and differ in modality. Though, this might be a challenge for the lecturers to send the material one day before class.

Another adjustment that is important to make is the speech tempo and to take pauses while speaking. Though sign language is delivered in a simultaneously as well as sequentially way, there are still some concepts in the target language (English) that is difficult to be interpreted in *Bahasa Isyarat Indonesia* (BISINDO). Lecturers who speak very fast might cause the interpreter to lose track of the teaching content and to catch up with the sequence of information delivered by the lecturers. When asked about their speech tempo, the lecturers and interpreter display their reflection as shown in table 3.

Table 3
Lecturer’s and Interpreter’s Answers Related to Speech Tempo

Statement		L1	L2	L3	L4
Lecturers	During the teaching process (e.g. explaining), I pay attention to the speech tempo, so the interpreter is able to catch up with my utterances.	Sometimes	Often	Often	Sometimes
Interpreter	During the interpreting process, I manage to adjust my signing speed with the lecturers’ speech tempo	Always	Often	Often	Often
Courses		Reading I	Writing II	Reading III	Writing III

Based on those answers, there are two types of consideration shown by the lecturers. Two lecturers sometimes pay attention to their speed while speaking. The other two often realize that they need to slower their pace while explaining to the students. When their answers compared to the answer from the interpreter, there are two findings emerged. She always can

manage to adjust her signing speed with L1's tempo. This is interesting if we look at how L1's attention with his tempo. In his teaching, L1 might not always aware of his tempo but basically he speaks in a slow pace while teaching or outside the class. The interpreter can also manage her signing speed when she assists courses with L2 and L3—who often pay attention to their speech tempo. Her efforts to manage her sign in Reading I, Writing II, and Reading III is quite the same. It seems fit that the speech tempo might affect the signing quality by the interpreter. However, this is interesting to find that the interpreter is able to catch up with L4' talking speed while she does not always pay attention on that. In the interview, the interpreter describes that L4 tends to use simpler vocabularies compared to other lecturers. Therefore, she is able to catch up with L4 utterances though the speed is high. Another factor is that L4, once in a while, switched to *Bahasa Indonesia* in the middle of her teaching. This situation happens usually when she realized that the students were confused with particular topic or concept (e.g. terminologies). L4 would switch to *Bahasa Indonesia* in order to emphasize her teaching content. At this point, L4 used her own strategy to build understanding among students. Therefore, students are able to grasp the meaning of certain concepts that might be difficult for them to understand.

Besides the speed, the use of pause in delivering the content in their speech is a crucial matter as well. By doing interpreting work, an interpreter is encouraged to be a 'communication cop' and is expected to be able to know the timing, the rhythm, and also the pause of the speaker's utterances (Roy, 2000: 103). As matter of fact, pauses help the deaf student to digest the content transferred by the interpreter. It is important to notice that, during a communicative event, the interpreter is usually one to two sentences behind the speaker (National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes, 2017). When the interpreter could spend her time well in signing, the deaf is able to see the translated-explanation clearly.

Based on the questionnaire data, L1 and L3 often pause when they speak in order to give time for the interpreter to finish the lines. L2 sometimes produced pause in his utterances while teaching and L4 seldom produced pause. Interestingly, the interpreter often managed to catch up with the explanation of the lecturers. The interpreter ability to catch up with the lecturers' speech may be due to the shared-knowledge of the teaching content (and its register) between the lecturers and interpreter. This is made possible since the interpreter is also a teacher of language (non-English teacher) who has general knowledge background in language and linguistics.

By looking at the speech tempo and pauses, it seems crucial for the interpreter to know what exactly the material is beforehand. Therefore, it is necessary for lecturers and interpreter to sit down and discuss the mechanics

of the teaching material (only for the explanation, exercises are excluded) before class. Since English is not the Interpreter's first language, it would be wise to also give her time to have access to and study the teaching material. In this way, the interpreter would have ample of time to practice 'signing' the teaching material in English.

Closing Remarks

Learning English through sign language is possible as well as challenging. What makes it challenging is when English is interpreted through sign language (in this case, BISINDO). From the discussion above, we identify several issues: 1) adjustment to types of credit units offered to Deaf student; 2) co-operative teaching between the lecturers and the interpreter; 3) teaching and learning strategies between the lecturers, the interpreter, and the Deaf student.

The composition of credit units offered to the Deaf student needs to be adjusted based on his needs. It is recommended that the Department to adjust their policy to accommodate the learning needs of the Deaf student (e.g. the type of courses, learning resources, interpreter, and other facilities).

The second issue is related to the co-operative teaching between the lecturers and the interpreter. This co-operation may take the form of the mechanics of preparing and delivering the teaching materials to the students in class. The lecturers need to understand that sign language interpreter also faces challenges in interpreting and transferring information, instruction, and notably the knowledge of English—in particular, reading and writing comprehensions. These challenges mostly related to keeping up with the lecturer's speed tempo and the lack of knowledge about certain linguistics materials. Another obstacle faced by the interpreter is to interpret technical terminologies which have no one-to-one interpretation in sign language. Therefore, it is suggested that the lecturers assist the interpreter in preparing the teaching material before class. Furthermore, the interpreter is expected to master both languages (English and sign language used by the deaf student). By giving ample of time to prepare the teaching materials, the interpreter can practice signing the materials to help with the flow of the teaching activities and communications in class.

Strategies adopted by the participants (the deaf student, the lecturers, and the interpreter) include speech and signing tempo, the use of sign-mixing (ASL and BISINDO), and finger-spelling. As mentioned by the deaf student, he finds out that learning English through BISINDO affects him to achieve the knowledge based on language concept he has acquired. In this early stage, one strategy the Deaf student suggested is using BISINDO combined with American Sign Language (ASL) and also mouthing in

English. The combination between BISINDO and ASL here is related to lexical properties—grammar (in ASL) is excluded. For example, when the deaf student need to confirm his sentences (in Writing course), he may use an ASL—or a combination between BISINDO and ASL—with mouthing in English and grammar in English, so he could interpret what he meant; and the lecture will get the structure of sentences he intends to ask. During the interpreting process, the interpreter and the deaf student have an understanding and a strategy that specific terminologies can be managed by using fingerspell (in BISINDO) though it will cost more time for both. If the interpreter gets the meaning, she will fingerspell the word or the expression in English (such as idioms), then continue with its meaning signed in BISINDO. If the interpreter loses the meaning and could not refer to specific sign, she tends to fingerspell the word or such expression while the student writes them down in his notebook.

The lecturers were also informed to adjust their speech tempo, enabling the interpreter keep the flow of information run smoothly to the Deaf student. Another strategy in conveying the message is mouthing. The Deaf student finds that the use of mouthing could help him in guessing the word. Mouthing helps him in figuring out expressions in English. His comprehension of English—which has been acquired during his previous study—encourages him to go into a deeper understanding of English. However, this is not the best strategy yet because he founds that being able to guess meaning of the word does not mean he is able to always understand the reason behind the word choice used by the lecturer or other hearing students immediately. This might be because there is a gap of learning and acquiring experience with the hearing peers in relation to the sense of language.

The strategies applied in order to manage the challenge described here are quite contextual to our teaching situation. Yet, we believe that, in this teaching condition, having someone (either lecturer/teacher or interpreter) with a strong foundation in both languages and master the languages—English and sign language would be ideal. Having a sign language interpreter in the classroom is also very valuable for the Deaf student. It is recommended that the interpreter could be someone with a strong background in the field that will be taught by the lecturers. Thus, it will ease her work while interpreting for the deaf student. We hope that this research might encourage more people to learn sign language and able to teach or transfer their knowledge (based on their expertise) in sign language as well as conduct more research on the language teaching and learning process to the Deaf students.

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